

FREMONT BUDGET COMMITTEE**06 DECEMBER 2005****APPROVED 12/12/2005**

The meeting came to order at 7:10 pm at the Town Hall. Present were Budget Committee members Kevin Zukas, Donald Gates Jr, Mike Miller, Joe Delahunty, and Charles Kimball. Also present was Town Administrator Heidi Carlson.

The School District budget for 2006-2007 was distributed to members. A copy of the minutes from last week and a letter from Janice O'Brien were also distributed. Members spent some time looking through these documents.

In follow-up to the letter from Janice O'Brien, questions were about whether or not a road could be cut over Andreski Drive through the Glen Oakes land to get to property behind it, if it were ever to be developed, to avoid the situation such as with Treaty Court of having to travel all the way around to get back into Fremont. The tax maps were consulted, and Carlson will see about the terms of the conservation easement and whether that would be allowed.

There was discussion about zoning, zoning districts, and mixed residential and commercial/industrial uses.

With regard to the Smith properties, currently being investigated by the Open Space Committee, if they are not purchased by the Town, and later privately developed, it is possible that the only access for Fremont is Route 125. Having a potential access way across the Glen Oakes land would alleviate that. Carlson expressed doubt that this would be allowed on the protected lands.

Questions from last week included how many bonds were outstanding and what was the duration of them. Carlson explained the outstanding bonds:

Parks and recreation fields: originally a five year issue, with 2 years remaining;

Safety Complex: originally a 20 year bond, with 12 years remaining;

Library: originally a 20 year bond, with 16 years remaining; and

Glen Oakes: 20 year issue and has the first payment due in 2006

There was discussion about the Police Department SUV and putting it in the rotation of police cruisers. There was discussion about going to a diesel engine to make it last longer and perhaps be worth more at the end of its life; there was also discussion about the pros and cons of using a utility vehicle in the normal rotation. Chief Janvrin had mentioned to Gates that one of his concerns was that an SUV would not last as long if in the normal rotation of police cruisers, and that he was concerned about it not handling as well as a cruiser in some circumstances.

Delahunty felt there were solutions without spending that amount of money on a new SUV.

There was discussion about the requirement to hold a public hearing prior to purchasing land. Carlson found the citation in RSA 36-A:5 with regard to spending conservation funds on purchase of land or easements. Carlson informed the committee that the Glen Oakes closing was likely to be concluded this week.

Delahunty posed questions about the rescue squad budget and how it would be affected if the departments were combined. Gates indicated the Selectmen have not had sufficient time to

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discuss it yet, but the Board feels that if it is to be changed that it would need to be a town meeting vote given that the Fast Squad was initiated/created at a town meeting in 1984.

Delahunty asked for the Selectmen to take a position on the combination of the two departments before the next Budget Committee meeting. Gates said he would discuss it with the Board.

Motion was made by Miller and seconded by Zukas to approve the minutes as amended. The vote was approved 5-0.

Carlson announced that the date for petition warrant articles is February 7, 2006 for the Town. There was discussion about how warrant articles are presented and what the timeline is for submission. Carlson explained this process. It is expected the School District petition deadline would be two days later, or Thursday February 9, 2006.

Audrey Karamourtopoulos arrived at approximately 8:00 pm.

Carlson began discussion of the Town's budget presentation for this evening on the social service agencies. Copies of all of the requestor's information pages were distributed as well as a cumulative tally list of all the agencies. There is one new agency this year, the Community Services Council of NH, which will go on as a warrant article. There was discussion about what the Town sees as direct benefit services for every dollar, and questions about staffing and volunteer versus paid staff.

Rockingham VNA is an affiliate of Exeter Hospital and that the hospital uses them to generate money and provide services. Exeter Hospital is a for-profit hospital, and questions were asked about how the VNA works off of that. Questions unanswered in the literature will be forwarded to the agencies for more information. Members will read through the information submitted to determine if they need further information on other services or information.

Carlson explained that some agencies have sliding fee scales, and some do not charge for low and moderate income households.

There was discussion about the relative amount of time spent on the school budget versus the town budget.

Carlson reviewed the Health Officer budget, unchanged from 2005 in the total amount of \$2,000.

The Direct Assistance budget is up \$3,000 for a total of three more cases at \$1,000 each. Carlson walked through the process of assistance applications so the Committee was familiar with how the process works.

Carlson discussed the appraisal services budget. Carlson and Gates explained the Selectmen's process in choosing not to do a cyclical update, and to instead maintain our regular contract with MRI for annual updates. The cost analysis between the cyclical update and the every five year revaluation process were discussed.

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The property appraisal budget also includes \$6,100 for the Vision contract updates, software and maintenance, and \$2,200 for Vision maintaining the Town's data on their website. Carlson expressed that people seem to like having that service available so that they can view information at their convenience.

The Judicial and legal budget remains the same at \$15,000. Carlson explained that oral arguments are scheduled for tomorrow on the continuing 1999 MDR/Torromeo case in a national court. This is primarily being funded by the National Homebuilders Association.

The Personnel administration budget is increased due to two new proposed full-time positions budgeted for 9 months beginning on April 1, 2006. Health and dental rates are up slightly as well. FICA and Medicare is up approximately \$5,000 due to wage changes; and more people are now eligible for retirement.

The Committee again discussed ideas relative to two part-time people for the PD clerical position versus one full time.

Carlson handed out the Town Clerk's budget submission and there was general discussion. Members wanted more information about clerk revenues from the new services to see what impact that had on the appropriation increase request.

Members asked about car registrations by mail. Carlson will put the rest of the Clerk's backup data together for the committee to review as well.

The next meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on Monday December 12, 2005 at which time the school budget will be reviewed. All members were encouraged to attend the Holiday Open House in advance of the meeting, from 5:30 to 7:00 at the Fremont Safety Complex.

With no further business to come before the Committee, motion was made by Karamourtopoulos and seconded by Gates to adjourn the meeting at 9:50 pm. The vote was unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Heidi Carlson
Town Administrator